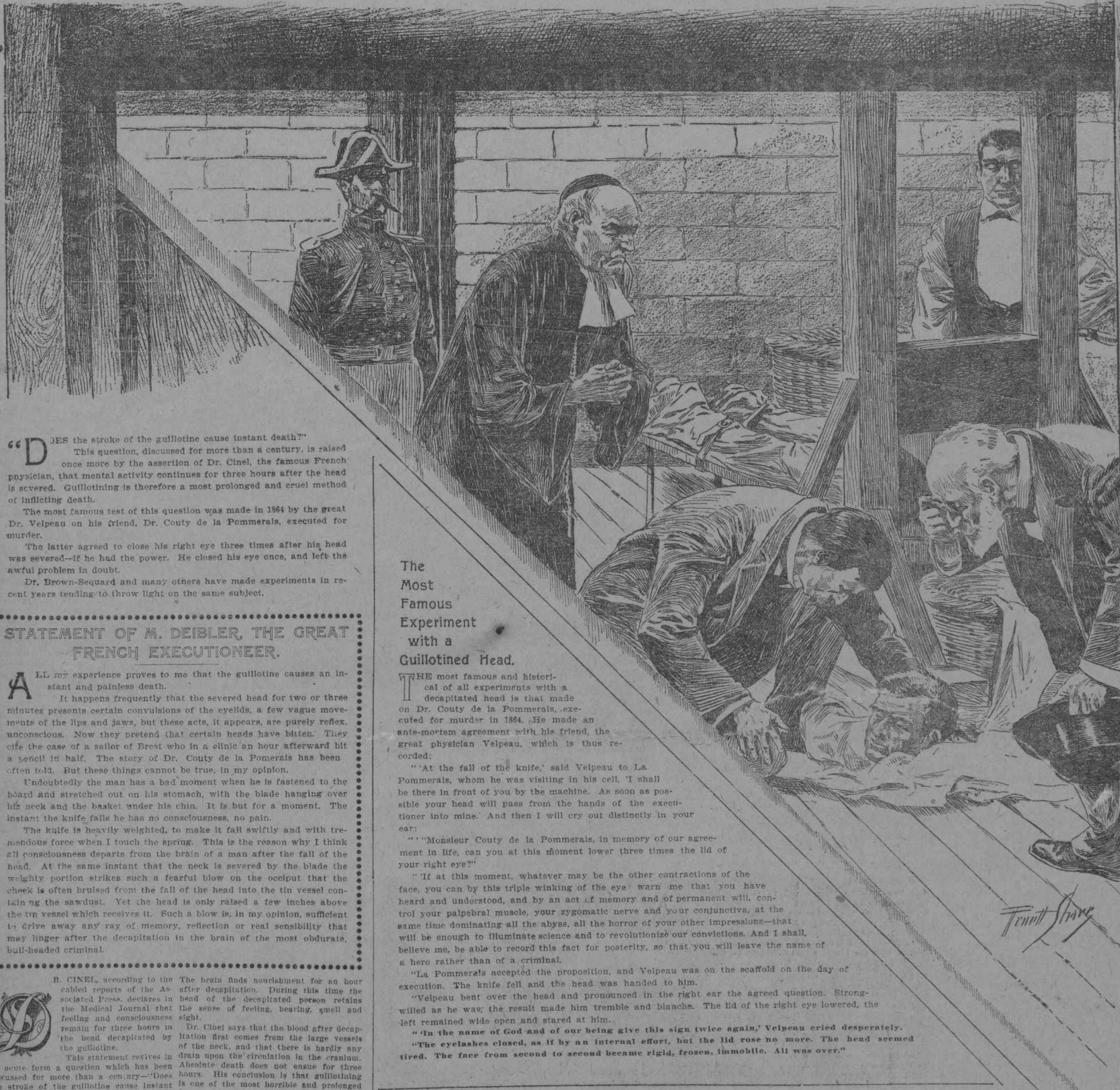


MOST INTERESTING QUESTION OF THE CENTURY.

Can It Be Possible, as Dr. Cinel, of Paris, Claims, That There Is Life, Feeling and Sensation in the Head of a Human Being for Three Hours After Being Severed by the Guillotine?



"DES the stroke of the guillotine cause instant death?" This question, discussed for more than a century, is raised once more by the assertion of Dr. Cinel, the famous French physician, that mental activity continues for three hours after the head is severed. Guillotining is therefore a most prolonged and cruel method of inflicting death.

The most famous test of this question was made in 1864 by the great Dr. Velpeau on his friend, Dr. Couty de la Pomerai, executed for murder.

The latter agreed to close his right eye three times after his head was severed—if he had the power. He closed his eye once, and left the awful problem in doubt.

Dr. Brown-Sequard and many others have made experiments in recent years tending to throw light on the same subject.

STATEMENT OF M. DEIBLER, THE GREAT FRENCH EXECUTIONEER.

AL my experience proves to me that the guillotine causes an instant and painless death.

It happens frequently that the severed head for two or three minutes presents certain convulsions of the eyelids, a few vague movements of the lips and jaws, but these acts, it appears, are purely reflex, unconscious. Now they pretend that certain heads have bitten. They cite the case of a sailor of Prest who in a clinic an hour afterward bit a pencil in half. The story of Dr. Couty de la Pomerai has been often told. But these things cannot be true, in my opinion.

Undoubtedly the man has a bad moment when he is fastened to the board and stretched out on his stomach, with the blade hanging over his neck and the basket under his chin. It is but for a moment. The instant the knife falls he has no consciousness, no pain.

The knife is heavily weighted, to make it fall swiftly and with tremendous force when I touch the spring. This is the reason why I think all consciousness departs from the brain of a man after the fall of the head. At the same instant that the neck is severed by the blade the weighty portion strikes such a fearful blow on the occiput that the cheek is often bruised from the fall of the head into the tin vessel containing the sawdust. Yet the head is only raised a few inches above the tin vessel which receives it. Such a blow is, in my opinion, sufficient to drive away any ray of memory, reflection or real sensibility that may linger after the decapitation in the brain of the most obdurate, bull-headed criminal.

The Most Famous Experiment with a Guillotined Head.

THE most famous and historical of all experiments with a decapitated head is that made on Dr. Couty de la Pomerai, executed for murder in 1864. He made an ante-mortem agreement with his friend, the great physician Velpeau, which is thus recorded:

"At the fall of the knife," said Velpeau to La Pomerai, whom he was visiting in his cell, "I shall be there in front of you by the machine. As soon as possible your head will pass from the hands of the executioner into mine. And then I will cry out distinctly in your ear:

"Monsieur Couty de la Pomerai, in memory of our agreement in life, can you at this moment lower three times the lid of your right eye?"

"If at this moment, whatever may be the other contractions of the face, you can by this triple winking of the eye warn me that you have heard and understood, and by an act of memory and of permanent will, control your palpebral muscle, your zygomatic nerve and your conjunctiva, at the same time dominating all the abyss, all the horror of your other impressions—that will be enough to illuminate science and to revolutionize our convictions. And I shall, believe me, be able to record this fact for posterity, so that you will leave the name of a hero rather than of a criminal.

"La Pomerai accepted the proposition, and Velpeau was on the scaffold on the day of execution. The knife fell and the head was handed to him.

"Velpeau bent over the head and pronounced in the right ear the agreed question. Strong-willed as he was, the result made him tremble and blanch. The lid of the right eye lowered, the left remained wide open and stared at him.

"In the name of God and of our being give this sign twice again," Velpeau cried desperately.

"The eyelashes closed, as if by an internal effort, but the lid rose no more. The head seemed tired. The face from second to second became rigid, frozen, immobile. All was over."

accepted as proof of the continuance of consciousness after decapitation.

Velpeau picked up the head of La Pomerai and asked the agreed question. The head closed its right eye once and opened it. Then all further symptoms of life ceased.

Dr. Velpeau was never able to decide whether or not his question had been answered. The full account of this extraordinary episode will be found elsewhere on this page.

Dr. Brown Sequard, one of the most daring surgeons and investigators of the century, performed many experiments tending to throw light on this subject. He decapitated a vigorous dog and immediately transfused fresh blood into the head. The eyes of the dog exhibited terror and agony. They responded when touched by the finger and when a light was brought near them. Apparently the head exhibited feeling and consciousness.

The advocates of post-decapitation life derive great support from the declaration of Vulpius, one of the greatest French authorities on nervous diseases, in his work, "Lessons on the Nervous System."

"Perhaps," says Vulpius, "I shall be

taxed with temerity in maintaining that the experiment of transfusion realized by Dr. Brown Sequard would probably succeed on a man.

"If a physiologist attempted this experiment on the head of a condemned man he would view perhaps a great and terrible spectacle. Perhaps he would restore to this head its cerebral functions and awake in the eyes and facial muscles the movements which in man are provoked by the passions and thoughts of which the brain is the seat.

"I have no doubt that if this hypothesis were realized, the lips would, at most, form labial articulations, for the head would be separated from the apparatus necessary for the production of sounds.

"Why should not this experiment succeed? I leave aside the practical difficulties, but I seek in vain to find what the theoretical difficulties are. It is a question of general physiology, and it seems to me evident that what takes place in the cerebral functions of a mammal may take place also in a man."

Vulpius's statement induced Dr. Laborde to make a number of practical experiments

with the heads of guillotined criminals. The first of these was made in 1884. Dr. Laborde transfused the carotid arterial blood of a large dog into the severed head of a man. The experiment took place an hour and a half after the execution. He obtained a slight shivering contraction of the muscles of the face, a trembling of the skin and a reddening of the cheeks. He considered the experiment inconclusive.

His second experiment began an hour after the decapitation. It produced no result.

The third experiment was made at Troyes, twenty minutes after decapitation. The only symptom was the reddening of the cheeks. A fourth experiment at Caen gave no result.

The latest experimenter in this gruesome field is Dr. Paul Loye, at present a preparator in the physiological laboratory of the Sorbonne, and holding other important medical posts.

In company with Dr. Regnard he has visited a great number of executions in recent years. He concludes that decapitation is the end of mental life. Nevertheless

he has noted many facts which may be taken to support the other side of the case.

Here is Dr. Loye's account of one of the most remarkable executions he witnessed:

"Special arrangements were made through the courtesy of Professor Brouardel and the Procureur-General of the Court of Amiens by which we were enabled to examine the head two seconds after decapitation. Hardly had it fallen than it was in our hands.

"The patient this time was a man of thirty-eight, vigorous and energetic, who showed up to the moment of the fall of the knife the most complete confidence and calm. His face was not hideous from fright, as that of the condemned man at Troyes. It was, on the contrary, smiling and tranquil. Instead of becoming pale, it preserved its ruddy coloring. The head, even after being inserted in the lunette, preserved the same expression. I dwell on these details because they will aid us to determine the mental state of the individual at the moment when the knife struck.

"The head of the criminal was presented to us less than two seconds after the decapitation by one of the assistants of the executioner. His face preserved its pink color. The features remained immobile. The eyes were wide open, with pupils half dilated. The mouth was energetically closed. There was no spontaneous movement in the head—not the least fibrillary contraction in the face.

"We moved a finger near the eye of the head. The face remained impassive.

"We then touched the globe and the corner of the eye and the extremity of the eyelashes, and we observed, at every contact, a winking of the lids as marked as in a living man. The eyes closed each time, to reopen at once.

"The face assumed an expression which an imprudent observer would doubtless regard as conscious. We shall see that it is only a simple reflex action without connection with mental life.

"This winking of the eyelids, which we obtained five times in five seconds, ceased of the day.



DEIBLER'S COLLECTION OF PLASTER CASTS, SHOWING PAINFUL FACES OF GUILLOTINED MEN.

to show itself after a very brief time. By the sixth second it appeared no more. The touching of the eyes produced no result.

"The jaws were brought strongly together. In spite of powerful effort we could not pull them apart—we failed to open the mouth. The masseter muscles remained absolutely contracted.

"The pinching of the skin in the forehead, the cheeks, the chin, left the face immobile.

"One minute after decapitation the face began to pale. The ruddy color gave place to a gray tint. But the mouth remained firmly closed, with the dental arches pressed one against the other. Bringing a light near the eye caused no contracting of the pupil. The Iridian reflex did not appear.

"At the end of four minutes the face became bloodless and anemic. The eyebrows were half fallen. The mouth was still closed, but we could put a finger between the jaws. Various sensory excitements were attempted—cries in the ear, pinching the tongue and skin—but showed no result.

"We continued to observe the body twenty minutes."

"This awful problem exercises an ever increasing fascination for French physicians. Cinel's contribution to it is the most valuable of the day."

STATEMENT OF DOCTOR PAUL LOYE.

AFTER a series of the most exhaustive experiments, conducted in my laboratories, and after attendance at many executions, it is my fixed opinion that death by decapitation is instantaneous.

I have received into my hands the heads of decapitated criminals actually as they fell from the knife of the guillotine. The heads have never exhibited the least trace of psychic life after they were stricken off. Usually the face remains calm and impassive, though often there is muscular twitching and movement of the eyelids.

In my opinion, the pain produced by the wound upon the neck is not felt by the criminal. The spinal cord has been severed, and sensation has been destroyed before the pain had time to be communicated to the brain.

PAUL LOYE.

Auteur de "La Mort par la Decapitation," et preparateur du laboratoire de physiologie de la Sorbonne.

The Golf Girl's New Autumn Wraps, Cloakings and Hats.



HOUGH the golf cape has always been the most comfortable wrap a young woman could own it has never been a thing of beauty until this Autumn.

The new golf cloakings, which this week have made their first appearance in the New York shops, are attracting quite as much attention as the new silks.

They are all double-faced materials, and though sombre in hue on the outside, are lined with the gayest of plaids and plaids which show new and effective combinations of colors. The conventional blue and green plaids are being superseded by plaids in lighter and more unusual shades.

One of the most artistic of the new cloths is brown on the outside and lined with a white and green plaid, showing

three or four different shades of green. Then there are brown cloakings with the plaid lining in shades of yellow and white. Golf cloth in dark green is also very fashionable, lined with a green and white plaid.

As for the golf cloakings, in blue they come in an astonishing variety of shades, from deep royal blue to the popular cavalry shade, and the darker the blue the brighter the plaid lining. Deep blue lined with scarlet and white plaid is fashionable, and cadet blue lined with a plaid in blended shades of yellow and white.

This season these effective cloakings will not only be used for golf capes, but for carriage and travelling wraps. They make the jauntiest of jackets, with striking plaid revers and collars, and they are also effective for long wraps somewhat shawl-like in shape. These long shawl-shaped wraps

are among the conspicuous novelties of the season. They look like a pointed shawl when draped about the figure. Some are finished with short fringe matching the plaid lining in color.

The golf capes are longer than usual this Fall, and it is a fad with all the girls who wear them to select an outing hat which matches the cape in color, and is trimmed with a band of silk just like the plaid lining.

These hats are either a modified sombrero in shape or they have a straight, broad sailor brim. And they are trimmed with a puggaree which is merely a band of silk or crepe de chine laid in regular folds. When the hat, which imitates a sailor in shape, is worn, it is trimmed with not only the puggaree, but one or two quilts, which are no longer caught at the sides, but in the direct